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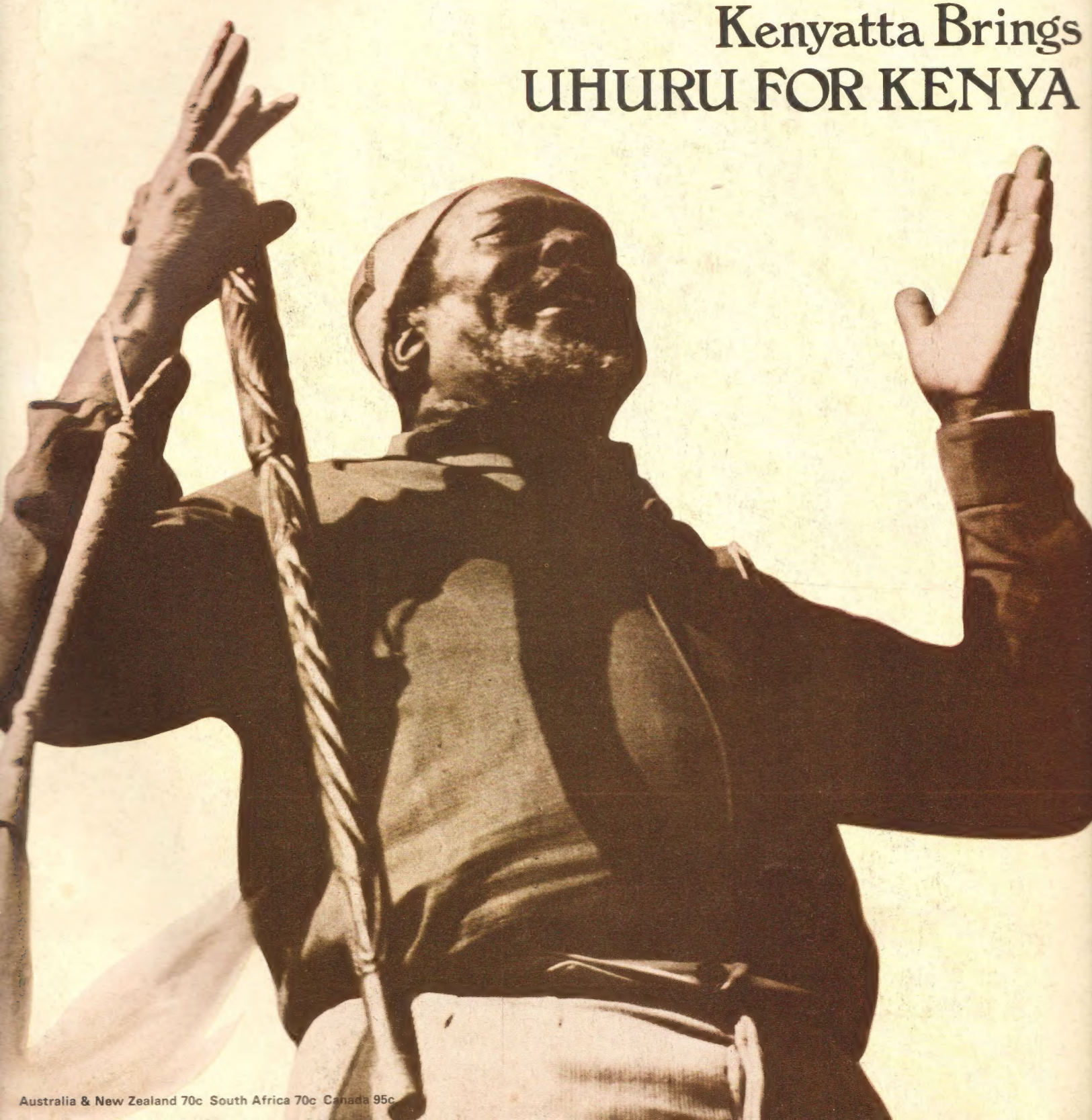
Kenyatta Brings UHURU FOR KENYA



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CONTENTS

2381. UHURU for Kenya
Weary and resentful of European domination, Kenya's Africans take up the cry of "Uhuru" – freedom – and focus their hopes on one man: Jomo Kenyatta.

2391. Picture Essay: Mau Mau
Militants among the Kikuyu tribe wage a barbaric terrorist war against whites and Africans alike in their determination to drive out the settlers.

2400. Journey to the Promised Land
The settlers win their war against Mau Mau, but nothing can now prevent the African advance to majority rule.

2403. Picture Essay: Burning Spear
Feared and detested by the whites as the leader of Mau Mau, Jomo Kenyatta graduates from prison to the prime ministership of an independent Kenya.

Cover: With his familiar fly-whisk dangling from his wrist and his jewelled ring gleaming in the sun, Jomo Kenyatta appears before his people as their Saviour.

UHURU FOR KENYA

For over 50 years Kenya was regarded as a preserve of the white man. He occupied the rich farmlands while those Africans who did not work for him as houseboys or labourers lived as best they could in the townships or the tribal reserves. Until well after the Second World War, the white man's privileged position seemed assured. "Uhuru" – freedom for Africans to determine their own political future – appeared to be no more than a fanciful notion. "Any attempt to hand over power to an immature race must be resisted," warned the influential Electors' Union of white settlers in 1950. "We are here to stay and the other races must accept that premise with all it implies." But there were many Africans who refused to accept the premise and some who were prepared to kill Europeans – and fellow-Africans – in their determination to win the coveted prize of Uhuru.

By Roy Lewis

The High God, Mwene-Nyaga, creator of all things, who lived on Mount Kenya, seemed wrath with the children of Gikuyu, his chosen son, and Mumbi, his son's wife. For as long as any Kikuyu elder could remember, the tribe had prospered in the forests around the mountain, turning its slopes into gardens. It was their own world, and they knew no other, until by growth of numbers the nine clans, descendants of the nine daughters of Gikuyu and Mumbi, needed land beyond the forest. Then they met the Wandorobo hunters, who sold them land, and the cattle-owning, lion-hunting Masai, who threw them back into the forests and the northern deserts, where only Turkana, Galla and Samburu could survive. And they met the wandering Red Men who were few but spat fire. Then a plague struck down the people, killing half of their numbers, and they shrank back into the forest.

The elders consulted the spirits of the ancestors. And those versed in magic and divination replied: To those punishments would be added an iron snake, brought by the Red Men. The Red Men multiplied throughout the land and harassed the Masai, driving them south. Then the Red Men began to encroach into the forests, and when the warrior children of Mumbi set on them with ambushes, the Red Men slaughtered them with their terrible weapons and took the land around the forests. The Red Men informed Mumbi's children that they were now the children of Queen Victoria. And the iron snake puffed up from the coast to Nairobi, "the place of cold winds."

In that time of tribulation, in the late 19th Century by the Red Men's reckoning, there was born to Wambui, wife of Muigai, a farmer of Ngenda in Kiambu, a healthy boy who was named Kamau wa Ngengi. Nobody knows in what year this was: the Kikuyu did not keep records as did the strangers. The boy lived in proximity to nature, learning wood-lore, animal-lore, and the workings of the spirits in all things. Then one day a pink-faced man named Scott asked permission to set up a mission to teach the new things and certain glad tidings. The boy considered and finally went, in November, 1909, to the mission school at Thogoto.

It was as Jomo Kenyatta that the world was to know this boy, first as the alleged leader of the Kikuyu-led Mau Mau terrorist movement of the early 1950s, then as the first Prime Minister and later President of an independent Kenya. To understand Kenyan nationalism it is necessary to understand Kenyatta – and to understand him we must first understand the land in which he was born. By the time he was baptized into the Scottish Kirk in 1914, the Kikuyu population was growing and many of the tribesmen had to go to work for the *bwanas* who were farming around Kiambu. The Kikuyu were one of a dozen "new caught peoples, half devil and half child" who were taken under British suzerainty in 1895 when the Imperial British East Africa Company (I.B.E.A.C.) could no longer manage on its own. Uganda had been made a British protectorate the previous year and the government now decided to go ahead with its controversial scheme to build a railway from the coast to Lake Victoria. Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, believed that without the railway Uganda would be lost, with dreadful consequences for the Suez Canal, and thus for India. George Curzon, Salisbury's foreign affairs spokesman in the House of Commons, told M.P.s that the protectorate in Uganda was "absurd" without a railway to the coast, adding that if the British did not build a line to the lake the Germans certainly would. (They had, in fact, already started one.) French ambitions were also feared and advocates of a British rail line stressed its decisive military importance.

George Whitehouse, a railway engineer, arrived in Mombasa on December 11, 1895, to take charge of the project and in 1898 the iron snake's tracks began to move inland. In 1899 they reached Nairobi, where the Kikuyu disputed the way with the advance parties and were machine-gunned. The Nandi, too, had tried to stop its construction, causing a fatal accident, and were also machine-gunned. Even the lions of Tsavo tried to stop it and, after eating 28 Indian coolies and a white assistant, they were shot by an irate colonel of the Indian Army. In 1902 the line was at last completed; what Henry Labouchere, the Liberal anti-imperialist, called the "lunatic express" could run from Mombasa to Kisumu (connecting with lake steamers), a distance of 657 miles.

The building of the railway contributed powerfully to the "pacification" of the local tribes. A sullen peace, punctuated from time to time by futile risings, prevailed in the area known as British East Africa. The tribes were ruled by Britain through their own chiefs, of whom the mightiest was the Kabaka of Buganda. The same pattern of rule was imposed on the Kikuyu and, when the tribe tried to explain that it had no chiefs but was organized by age groups depending upon seniority, chiefs were obligingly appointed – and paid – by the British.

But the pacification of the tribes provided no freight for the railway and, to the Treasury's horror, losses mounted. Lord Delamere, a hot-tempered landowner from Cheshire with a love for the wide open spaces of Africa, proposed a solution. The highlands on the fringe of the Kikuyu forests were suitable for farming and ranching. Delamere envisaged the English farming the highlands, the Indians (ex-coolies who built the railway) populating the coasts, and the Africans hewing wood and drawing water for both. The railway would pay its way by carrying the produce. Delamere and his friends found a temporary ally in Sir Charles Eliot, appointed Commissioner of the East African Protectorate in 1901. Eliot backed Delamere's demand for land and decided to encourage as many white settlers as possible. The Foreign Office was so desperate under the hounding of the Treasury that it considered encouraging Finns and Zionists to emigrate, but in the end enough Britons and South Africans moved in to pay for the trains.

Land seemed plentiful, but so, too, did the Masai. Most of the settlers urged that the tribe be placed in a reserve, thus removing the last obstacles to European occupation of the Naivasha region and also providing the settlers with a convenient pool of African labour. Eliot, however, adamantly opposed a Masai reserve. The tribe, he maintained, needed contact with Europeans in order to become "civilized." Overruled by the Foreign Office, Eliot resigned in 1904. His successor, Sir Donald Stewart, immediately signed a treaty with the Masai which granted them two reserves. In

1906 four more reserves in Kenya were created for the Kikuyu, Kitui, Kikumbuliu and Ulu tribes.

The settlers had an insatiable appetite for land, even if they could not use it. And at first, they could not. Delamere tried European crops: cereals, legumes, roots, fruits; with monotonous regularity they failed, destroyed by pests and diseases. Other noblemen followed him, sinking fortunes into taming the Masai grassland and the red soil of Kikuyu forest ridges. In the end they succeeded, backed by 20th-Century technology – and the indispensable labour of the Africans. But first sufficient African labour had to be enticed out of the forests. The authorities imposed hut and poll taxes which the blacks could pay only by working on the white men's farms. The settlers themselves demanded legalized methods of compulsion and the right to flog their black workers. The Colonial Office, which in 1905 took over the administration of Kenya from the Foreign Office, resisted the settler demands, but did agree to prohibit Africans from growing cash crops such as coffee, lest they become rich enough to refuse work on the white farms.

From the beginning, the settlers saw themselves winning self-government or seizing it, like the Americans. By 1914, they had four members – appointed, not elected – in the Governor's Legislative Council, whereas the Indians had one and the Africans none. The whites also had powerful friends in London and some could speak for Kenya in the House of Lords. Governors had to compromise between their duty to uphold the principle of Colonial Office "trusteeship" and the ceaseless European demands for more land, more power, more cheap labour. The officials who administered the "reserves" were supposed to be independent of the settlers; in practice, they were themselves part of settler society and many retired to farms in the highlands. So even with self-government far off, the colony was largely managed in the interests of the white highlanders – who, admittedly, produced most of the revenue.

Until the early 1920s this aggressive, powerful and uninhibitedly racialist group saw the Indian shop-owning and commercial community, backed by the India Office, as its greatest rival. Having excluded the Asians from landownership, the whites sought also to restrict their political influence. Intelligent, educated and outnumbering Europeans by four to one, the Indians formed their own political association and quickly turned to the Africans for allies. In 1920, the year in which the protectorate became Kenya Colony, the Kikuyu chiefs also formed an association to prevent the European land-grab and the growth of semi-forced labour. In the following year Harry Thuku, a telephone operator earning £4 a month, formed the Young Kikuyu Association to protest against the doubling of the hut tax and to demand the abolition of *kipande*, restrictive pass laws.

Thuku received support from Desai, an Indian leader and editor of the journal, *East African Chronicle*, but was sacked for his political presumption and eventually deported to the desert region of the north as a danger to good order. The Nairobi Africans protested and on March 16, 1922, a number were shot down, much as the Indians were at Amritsar, while cheering settlers looked on. The settlers felt that the Africans had been taught a valuable lesson. Indeed, they had. But the lesson they learned was that African political organization was possible and could get results. The Colonial Office declared that African interests were paramount and, though this principle was later watered down, it was to remain the basis of British policy in Kenya.

Johnstone (his baptismal Christian name) Kenyatta was living at this time in some style in Nairobi. His education and training at Thogoto mission school had proved useful and in 1918 he had taken lodgings at Kilimani, near Nairobi, attended evening classes and finally obtained a job as a meter-reader for the municipal water department. Entering into the convivialities of the Indian quarter, he became a well-known figure, cycling round the city in his slouch hat, breeches and settler-style bush jacket. But he was soon in trouble with his missionary friends, white and black. Not only was he drinking intoxicants, but his intended wife, Grace Wahu, became pregnant by him. At first, Kenyatta defied the Kirk, then bowed to its tribal and spiritual authority. Kenyatta was also listening to much political talk. Sir Edward Grigg, who became Governor in 1925, and Leo Amery, the new imperialist at the Colonial Office, were considering a settler-ruled federation of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda. When, in 1927, the Hilton Young Commission was set up to discuss the proposed union, and the Asians opposed it, the Africans saw a chance of publicizing their own grievances over land and the repressive laws that restricted their liberty and weighed them with taxation.

Thuku, however, was still in exile and a successor was needed to plead the African cause with the whites. The Kikuyu Central Association had emerged in 1925, after a short break in the activities of the Young Kikuyu Association following Thuku's arrest; it carried on his policies and he was its chairman. In 1927 Kenyatta was persuaded to leave his well-paid job and become the organizing secretary, and editor of *Muigwithania*, the first African-owned journal. Written in the Kikuyu vernacular, it began to put forward Kikuyu demands for education, abolition of the hut tax on women and restitution of stolen land. Its articles, skilfully and bafflingly allusive, but within the press laws, earned Kenyatta the official label of a "dangerous agitator." When the Hilton Young Commission met, the settlers' demand for more land or the "delimitation of boundaries" was first on the agenda, and Kenyatta gave evidence. When the commission moved to London, Kenyatta insisted on following it.

So far as Kikuyu aims were concerned at the time, the move was a waste of money; but it did enable Kenyatta to create a base in London from which he could win sympathy and support for the Africans and develop his own education and career. He failed, however, to get an interview with the Colonial Office, although the incoming Labour government of 1929 rebuffed settler hopes of responsible government for whites only. Grigg was in London and Kenyatta met him unofficially. The young nationalist agitator made a not unfavourable impression on the Governor though Grigg took the precaution of setting the police Special Branch on to him. More importantly, Kenyatta made contact with left-wing

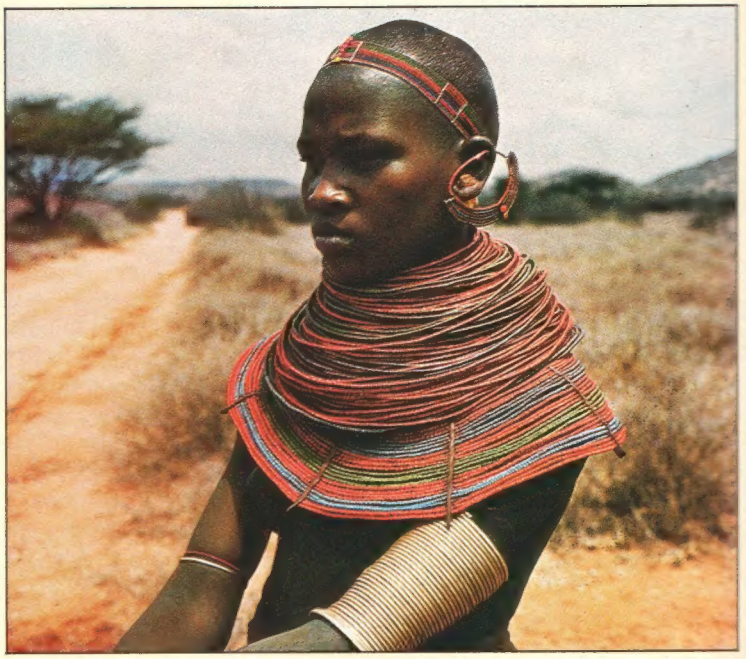
continued on p. 2386

THE TRIBAL TRADITION

When the white man arrived in Kenya there were some 20 tribes, each with its own distinctive way of life and each divided from the others by mutual fear and suspicion. But the Europeans, with their mission schools, technology and demand for land and wage-labour, gradually distorted the old tribal structures. The Gospel message, improved education and common servitude to the white man implanted in Africans the seeds of a concept that was eventually to challenge both tribalism and white supremacy: the new concept was nationalism. It arose first among the Kikuyu and the Luo, the two biggest tribes in Kenya. Reconciling their ancient animosities, they produced politically aware leaders who set about the difficult task of winning support from the smaller tribes. "We cannot achieve freedom," declared Jomo Kenyatta of the Kikuyu, "if it is demanded by one tribe only."

The Kikuyu are agriculturalists living a settled village existence (above). Female labour is important to the community and even young mothers (right) must help with basic chores like collecting firewood.

A Luo tribesman parades in traditional dress. Like the Kikuyu, the Luo were also an agricultural people, but bitter rivalry existed between them for generations.



This Turkana tribeswoman prizes her ornate necklaces. Her ancestors were tough farmers and herdsmen who migrated from regions near the Nile to the fertile grazing lands of northern Kenya.

A woman of northern Kenya's Samburu tribe displays the elaborate beaded jewellery which is the customary sign of a local beauty.

A Masai warrior prepares for a ceremonial dance. A wandering tribe of herdsmen, the Masai were renowned for their ferocity and their whole society was geared for war.

anti-colonialists such as Fenner Brockway and Kingsley Martin. Another contact was Drummond Shiels, who took over as Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office in Ramsay MacDonald's government. Shiels disliked Grigg and sympathized with the political ambitions of the Kikuyu.

In January, 1930, the two men met and Shiels urged on Kenyatta the need to avoid extremism and to press for ordered, constitutional advancement. It was, perhaps, good advice, but sometimes difficult to follow in the settler-dominated political climate of Kenya itself. In the previous year Kenyatta had begun to broaden his horizons with a trip to Germany and Russia. What he did there is unknown, as, indeed, is the manner in which he got there. An Indian Communist apparently helped him and he himself explained that an American Negro, "a commercial traveller," had offered to pay all his expenses on a "business trip" to Berlin, Hamburg, Leningrad, Moscow, Odessa, Sebastopol, Yalta and Istanbul. On his return to London, Kenyatta wrote a fiery article for the *Daily Worker* under the headline "Give Us Back Our Land." He later maintained that its tone had been hardened by the *Worker's* sub-editors.

Kenyatta was a gregarious young man and his time in Europe was not entirely taken up with political activities. But in September, 1930, with his credit exhausted, Kenyatta left for home although he risked Harry Thuku's fate, as he very well knew. Kenyatta's prestige upon his return to Nairobi was enormous, for he had made his mark in the capital of the Empire and mixed freely with whites, even well-known whites. Among Africans his reputation for knowledge of the white man's world and of the levers of its political and social machinery was unequalled. Kenyatta had by now clearly finished with Thogoto and mission schools. He helped to organize the new independent schools which the tribalists were setting up. The Kikuyu passion for education resulted in all the available places in both mission and independent schools being filled, but the independent schools henceforth were the nursery of emergent nationalism.

While Kenyatta was in London a controversy which involved tribal customs, Christianity, Africanism, Europeanization and politics, reached its height in Kenya. The Kikuyu, like many other African tribes, initiated girls as well as boys into adulthood by circumcision. It was an important rite, making the girl a member of the tribal community, marking the end of her education, her readiness for sexual activity and her entitlement to a marriage settlement. The mutilation which a girl undergoes varies but the Kikuyu operation is one of the more drastic. The practice was totally condemned by European doctors; it also shocked the missionaries and, as a result, became inextricably involved with Christian proselytizing and the status of African women.

In the 1920s opposition to the practice of female circumcision grew steadily among the Protestant Churches in Kikuyuland. (The Roman Catholics were not concerned with the issue.) Some sects introduced rules forbidding it, or its encouragement, on pain of Church discipline. The intention was not merely to render cliterodectomy more hygienic but to make its practice incompatible with Christianity. The government, to the rage of the Kirk, declined to take "strong action" against the practice.

Then in 1929 came a crisis. In March a conference of all the Churches in Kikuyuland had passed three resolutions condemning the practice. It must be noted that it was the Kikuyu clergy as much as the Scottish who were forcing the issue, and indeed demanding a uniform attitude from all the Churches. The result was a massive desertion from the Churches, although not from nominal Christianity. Grace Wahu, Kenyatta's wife, was among the defectors. By October a scurrilous dance song, directed against the Churches, was being sung in the villages. Other verses were written extolling and glorifying the absent Kenyatta and belittling the chiefs and the government: the whole question showed how deep and bitter was the African discontent within the colony.

On his return home Kenyatta was questioned on the matter, and he knew that he was being put to a political test. He exhibited the evasive skill in not entirely committing himself which was to serve him well in the future. His position was that it was for the Church to educate, and for a political body – the K.C.A. – to avoid disputes about tribal customs. He added that he himself was against the custom. Kenyatta was even now laying his claim to be the sole Kikuyu spokesman.

In January, 1931, convinced the natives were under control, Grigg permitted Harry Thuku to return from exile. The veteran was rapturously received and Kenyatta decided that two leaders were one too many (and he was the junior) at a time which was unripe for political action. In May, the secretary of the K.C.A. again left Kenya. This time he would not return for 15 years. The Hilton Young Commission was still taking evidence, and there was still publicity to be won by appearing before it, notably during the hearings on the plan to "delimit" white and black areas. Among the Kikuyu the conviction had become immovable that virtually all the White Highlands had been stolen from them; Kenyatta's job was to argue the original extent of tribal territory.

Political activity continued in Kenya during Kenyatta's absence, but under Thuku's leadership both the tribe and the K.C.A. became divided. Rivalries developed in the latter, which split in 1935 when Thuku formed the Kikuyu Provincial Association among the Kikuyu. Thuku over the years became increasingly "loyalist" in his approach, while the K.C.A. degenerated into an inefficient collection of unhappy, leaderless individuals. The settlers had to stomach Hilton Young's reiteration of the paramountcy of native interests, but they extended their influence on local government to the point where members of the Legislative Council were given control of departments as virtually embryo cabinet ministers for the new state.

Kenyatta, in London, remained throughout the secretary of the K.C.A., but his role is somewhat mysterious. He was consulted on K.C.A. decisions, but he seems not to have kept the Association always informed of his own activities. He was still a powerful political figure in Kikuyuland, yet often he seemed psychologically as well as physically separated

from his native land, going his own, sometimes very Westernized, way. He was, however, consciously preparing for the political future to which he felt destiny was calling him. He attended summer schools and Socialist gatherings, spent some time in the Quaker College of Woodbrooke, near Birmingham, and alternated between Communists and Bloomsbury liberals. He gave evidence in London to the Carter Land Commission, which eventually gave the Kikuyu more land, although nothing like what the tribe had claimed. Yet when the Commission took evidence in Kenya in 1933, it developed that not only had Thuku not heard from Kenyatta, he did not even know the secretary of K.C.A. had given evidence earlier and had promised the Commission a special paper on Kikuyu land-holding customs.

In the summer of 1932 Kenyatta made a second visit to Moscow, although it was not authorized by the K.C.A. He was taken there by the West Indian revolutionary, George Padmore, a professional Comintern agent based in Hamburg, one of whose tasks was to enrol agents from colonial races. Padmore may, indeed, have been the "American Negro" friend who arranged Kenyatta's first trip to the Soviet capital in 1929. This time he attended a special revolutionary institute in Moscow and was certainly being trained as some sort of an agent. Then in August, 1933, the Comintern disbanded the International Trade Union of Negro Workers, the organization under which both Kenyatta and Padmore were working. The Negro section of the Comintern was purged. Padmore resigned his posts, was immediately vilified, and Kenyatta as his protégé was left in a dangerously weak position. Moscow was not the place for a would-be revolutionary to burn his bridges.

It is not known how Kenyatta – or Padmore – managed to leave Russia, but by the autumn of 1932 Kenyatta was back in London. There is no evidence to support the claim made years later by the C.I.D. that he was being groomed as Padmore's successor, and it has never been proved that he was a Communist. A revolutionary – or, perhaps more accurately, a rebel – he certainly was, although as events proved, a mild, tolerant and cautious one. His subvention from the K.C.A. was exhausted, but noting that politics in Kenya were at the ebb, he decided to remain in London. He found work in the Phonetics Department of University College, which paid speakers of obscure languages or dialects to make proper phonetic records of their vernacular speech. Kenyatta was a genuine find: it seems he was the only native of Kikuyuland in London and for several years was able to make a small income out of his knowledge of Kikuyu. Poverty, however, was never far away, and in 1934 Kenyatta found an intriguing way of making a little extra money. Some 250 coloured extras were needed by Alexander Korda for his new film *Sanders of the River*, which was to star Paul Robeson. Kenyatta played a minor chieftain and enjoyed himself thoroughly.

His work in phonetics led to a meeting with the eminent anthropologist, Professor Bronislaw Malinowski, then teaching at the London School of Economics. Kenyatta began studying anthropology in Malinowski's seminars, which he attended for about two years. Out of his academic work came his famous book, *Facing Mount Kenya*, published in 1938. The book is a collection of studies of Kikuyu life and customs and originated in the papers which Kenyatta wrote for Malinowski's seminars. But these were scattered essays; it was a keen Marxist lecturer for the Workers' Educational Association, Dinah Stock, who helped give them the coherence and order which made the book a polemical *tour de force*. She had been introduced to Kenyatta at a rally in Trafalgar Square; they set up house together and began a period of collaboration which greatly added to Kenyatta's political maturity.

Kenyatta's book in a sense was literally a weapon for use against imperialism. In his anthropological writings he proclaimed an alternative to European culture, one which suited many sentiments prevalent in the 1930s. He argued for indigenous culture in harmony with nature as against the so-called "civilizing" role of modern captalism. Kenyatta boldly asserted the value of the African tribal experience. The Kikuyu, he challengingly maintained, was not a forest "primitive," but a man of cultural achievement equal to any European. Kenyatta stressed the accord of man, land and nature: the "children of Mumbi" lived in a world almost like that of Rousseau's noble savages. He uncompromisingly defended magic, insisting on its medicinal and psychological powers, but insisted also that it must be practised by the tribe's approved witch-doctor fraternity. This practice he contrasted with the wizardry of individuals who turned for evil purposes to the dark forces of nature.

Facing Mount Kenya also depicts a socialism in action and a human nature that is altruistic and co-operative rather than selfishly competitive. It is, further, an assertion of man as man, a defiant rejection of the mechanical man of white science and technology. Kenyatta also attacked the missionaries (who had given so many Kikuyu the power to articulate so well and to move in the white world) as cultural imperialists. He now firmly defended the "beautiful custom" of female circumcision, playing down the operation to the level of a Harley Street appendectomy and playing up the young girls' vows of chastity, family welfare and tribal service. Throughout the book he argued clearly and constantly against the "Europeanization" of what was of equal worth to anything a crumbling scientific culture could offer the human soul. The frontispiece of the book was a photograph of a new Kenyatta: bearded, with a skin cloak over one shoulder and fingering the point of a spear. He took as well a new first name: Jomo ("Burning Spear"), itself a challenge to the white rulers. Perhaps with this book Kenyatta was quite consciously developing an African historical myth. In later years, many Europeans were to examine it to discover clues to both Kenyatta and the Kikuyu.

During his years in London a growing sense of pan-Africanism was an important part of his intellectual development. He took an active part in the International African Service Bureau (I.A.S.B.), founded in March, 1937, to propagate the pan-African ideal and to co-ordinate the activities of the coloured intellectuals in London. When the I.A.S.B. put on an

anti-colonial display in September, 1938, posters of Kenyatta in his *Facing Mount Kenya* posture were part of it and he took his turn as a speaker. He never endorsed the I.A.S.B. line that during a European war the colonial people had the right to rise in rebellion, but he did question whether subject races should fight for Britain again unless they were promised the freedom they demanded.

The I.A.S.B. itself had grown out of an *ad hoc* group called the International African Friends of Ethiopia, formed to demonstrate solidarity with Emperor Haile Selassie against the Italians. When the Emperor was forced to leave his country and arrived as an exile at Waterloo Station in June 1936, Kenyatta was there. One eyewitness reported that an African – Kenyatta – broke from the crowd, through the cordon of officials, and disregarding protocol embraced Selassie as African to fellow African. There was to be a sequel more than 25 years later when Kenyatta welcomed the Emperor as the first head of state to visit self-governing Kenya.

The outbreak of war trapped Kenyatta in England and sealed off his communications with Kenya and the K.C.A., which was very shortly banned for alleged contacts with the Italian Consul in Nairobi. Dinah Stock, meanwhile, had decided that she and Kenyatta should leave London and in 1939 they had gone to stay with a friend of Miss Stock's in Storrington, Sussex. Kenyatta became an agricultural worker, which enabled him to avoid conscription. Soon after they had arrived in Storrington, Miss Stock left for a teaching job in Yorkshire. In 1940 Kenyatta met a young governess, Edna Grace Clarke, and on May 11, 1942, they were married in a register office. She bore him a son, Peter, in August, 1943. Although Kenyatta rarely spoke of Grace Wahu, his first wife and his two children in Kenya, Edna accepted what he always emphasized: that one day he would have to return to Kikuyuland.

As the war progressed, Kenyatta became increasingly bored with his rural retreat. The Sussex landscape reminded him of Kenya and he became more and more fearful as to his future in his homeland. Sound recordings sent to him by friends in the B.B.C. proved that Kikuyu mothers were teaching their children his name. He was not forgotten, but what could he do to reach them? Throughout the war he remained in touch with Padmore, who was in England with the pan-African group and the I.A.S.B. and in 1945 Kenyatta attended the fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester as the delegate of the still illegal Kikuyu Central Association. With Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah, Wallace Johnson of Sierra Leone, and others from the colonies, Kenyatta helped draw up a declaration against colonialism. "Africa for the Africans" expressed the philosophy of the movement and in the summer of 1945 it no longer seemed wildly unrealistic. The arch-imperialist, Churchill, was out of office; the newly returned Labour Party was committed to the independence of India, the keystone and *raison d'être* of the British Empire. Africa's day must follow India's. In a pamphlet, *Kenya: Land of Conflict*, Kenyatta hastily grafted pan-Africanism upon the Kikuyuism expounded in *Facing Mount Kenya*. Then he returned home.

He found his tribe in ferment, but a complacent ruling class. The Africans had made some progress during his absence. The churches were moving towards multiracialism and the missionaries were championing African rights. In October, 1944, Eliud Mothu had become the first African appointed to the Legislative Council and a tribally mixed body, the Kenyan African Union (K.A.U.) had been formed to support him. The Africans, however, were not to be satisfied with such piecemeal progress. Thousands of East Africans had served in the British forces, and found the contrast between fighting alongside white troops, and being despised and offered menial work by white civilians on their return home, hard to endure.

Kenya had a new governor, Sir Philip Mitchell, a man with considerable experience of East Africa. He represented the liberal wing of colonial thinking at the time: but he believed in Britain's role as a trustee with a "civilizing mission" in Africa and his paternalist assumptions were utterly unpalatable to the African nationalist. The settlers brought out their "Kenya Plan," which envisaged the role of the African as what it had been in 1905. They demanded more British investment in an enlarged white settlement which could soon become a white Dominion of East Africa. The settlers now carried ministerial portfolios, and especially the key department of agriculture. And this in a country where fewer than 30,000 Europeans lived among almost five million Africans.

Kikuyuland itself had prospered agriculturally, but the pressure on the land had grown with the increase of population and discontent had mounted with greater Kikuyu prosperity and education. It was, in short, the classic moment for a revolution.

In September, 1946, Kenyatta was given a tumultuous reception at Mombasa as the Messiah from overseas who had returned to take charge. Kenyatta sensed the feeling of the masses when he blurted out that the whites and Asians must go, though he did not say when. On other occasions he insisted there was room for all races. He used to the full the allusive power of the Kikuyu language, and the ambiguous concepts of Marxist politics, to keep the crowd happy and to avoid getting into trouble for saying something actionably subversive. Another cause of concern to Kenyatta was the overwhelmingly Kikuyu orientation of emergent African nationalism in Kenya. He saw the difficulty of relying entirely on the one tribe: the others must be roused and won over. Progress was made with the Embu, Meru and Kamba, but elsewhere the older tribal divisions prevailed, despite the efforts of men such as Oginga Odinga, a Luo, who came from Nyanza province.

The Kenya African Union was theoretically inter-tribal, but was in fact almost entirely Kikuyu in composition. Its journal, *Sauti ya Msafrica*, ventilated Kikuyu grievances and saw the highlands as a Kikuyu preserve to be won for one tribe. It was led by James Gichuru and Peter Mbiyu Koinange, the son of the respected Senior Chief Koinange. Kenyatta's relationship with the latter's family was vitally important to his career. He had in the past abused government-appointed chiefs such as Koinange, and indeed Koinange in particular. On his return to Kenya, Kenyatta sought an alliance with the family and

High Jinks in Happy Valley

Smiling British immigrants in an idyllic pastoral setting (below) was the image that white Kenyans still liked to project of themselves after the Second World War. The early settlers, encouraged by the British government, who began arriving in substantial numbers after 1902, faced years of hardship and danger in building up prosperous farms in the "White Highlands" of the Rift Valley. But by the end of the Second World War they had succeeded in creating a landscape of huge estates and handsome homes.

Able to command squads of African labourers and servants, they shared a sense of citizenship in an improved version of England on the equator and prided themselves on their gracious living and vigorous sportsmanship. Polo flourished and five packs of hounds catered for the scarlet-coated hunting enthusiasts. The settlers also acquired a considerable reputation for hard drinking. In his book, *The White Tribes of Africa*, Richard West records the delighted amazement of a young Scotsman who had just received his induction into the social life of Kenya's Europeans in the early 1960s: "They go on drinking till morning [the young man exclaimed] and then stagger out to play tennis! This is really the land of the living." It was a land, too, of fabled loose living. A long-standing joke among whites was: "Are you married or do you live in Nairobi?" One area of the White Highlands was even known as Happy Valley because of its reputation for light-hearted adultery and regular wife-swapping.

was completely successful. Koinange gave him one of his daughters as Kenyatta's third wife. (He was also reunited with Grace Wahu and his children. Edna had remained in England.) Politically and socially he was now established among the traditional leadership of the tribe.

Peter Mbiyu offered Kenyatta the position of vice-principal of the Independent Teachers' College at Githunguri – facing Mount Kenya – and the following May when Peter left for England, Kenyatta took sole charge. He was elected President of the K.A.U. on June 1, 1947, Gichuru stepping down for him. The schools were indoctrinating their pupils – a total of some 30,000 – with nationalism. Songs and "hymns," sung to traditional Christian tunes, extolled Kenyatta and warned the people to prepare for a decisive and victorious struggle. The chiefs found their authority wasting away. Co-operation with the district officers dwindled; the eyes of the people were not on the improvement of their crowded reserve, but on the promised land.

To the settlers, who were angered at the growth of insubordination among the "Kukes," Kenyatta seemed the man responsible. But Kenyatta's power to apply the brakes was limited. The "Group of Forty," a band of self-appointed strong-arm men of the 1940 age group, mixing robbery and politics, used violence and intimidation to bring the tribe into line and prepare for an uprising. Early in 1949 the settlers began insistently to warn the government that subversive oathing was increasing among the Kikuyu.

The police, making arrests for illegal oathing, had already come across the phrase "Mau Mau" on settlers' farms in the Rift Valley. It gradually came to have immense significance. At first thought of as the name of a new pentecostal sect, then as a cover name for K.C.A. and even K.A.U., "Mau Mau" burgeoned in white imagination into a secret society opposed to British rule. The words are meaningless in themselves, and may have derived from a mere mishearing of some other words, but in the end even Africans adopted it as a convenient phrase for the resistance (as they saw it) to British repression, and for the "Land and Freedom Army" when this had been mobilized.

Oathing, as such, was not illegal. In Kikuyu custom it was used to settle questions of fact, of guilt and innocence. The ritual of oathing depended, for its binding power, on the belief that invoked spirits can destroy as well as affect human life. But to be valid, an oath had to be taken in public and in daylight. So much was accepted by the government. Only black magic was performed in secret. When it was reported that a new oath was being taken and administered in secret and by night, and in itself bound those who took it to conceal the fact that they were oathed, the police and the chiefs were directed to find those responsible. The new oaths were designed to commit a whole people to support an insurrection if and when it came, and stopping the oathing was difficult. For a man to cleanse himself of the oath was easy, but it had to be done before witnesses, and that was to invite death from the Forty Group. Most Kikuyu went along with the oath, hoping they would never have to act on it. (Efforts were made to prescribe similar oaths for non-Kikuyu, but with little effect.) It was soon demanded of Kenyatta that he denounce the secret oathing and Mau Mau, the secret African extremist group that first began to be talked of in 1948. This he did. At a huge rally on July 26, 1952, in Nyeri, at which he called himself "the leader of the children of Mumbi," he demanded African self-determination (to which K.A.U. was committed), which would not stop other races living in Kenya, and he made K.A.U.'s claim for more land, but added: "He who calls us the Mau Mau is not truthful. We know nothing [i.e. "do not approve of"] of this thing Mau Mau." Despite some [illegible] denounced the use of violence.

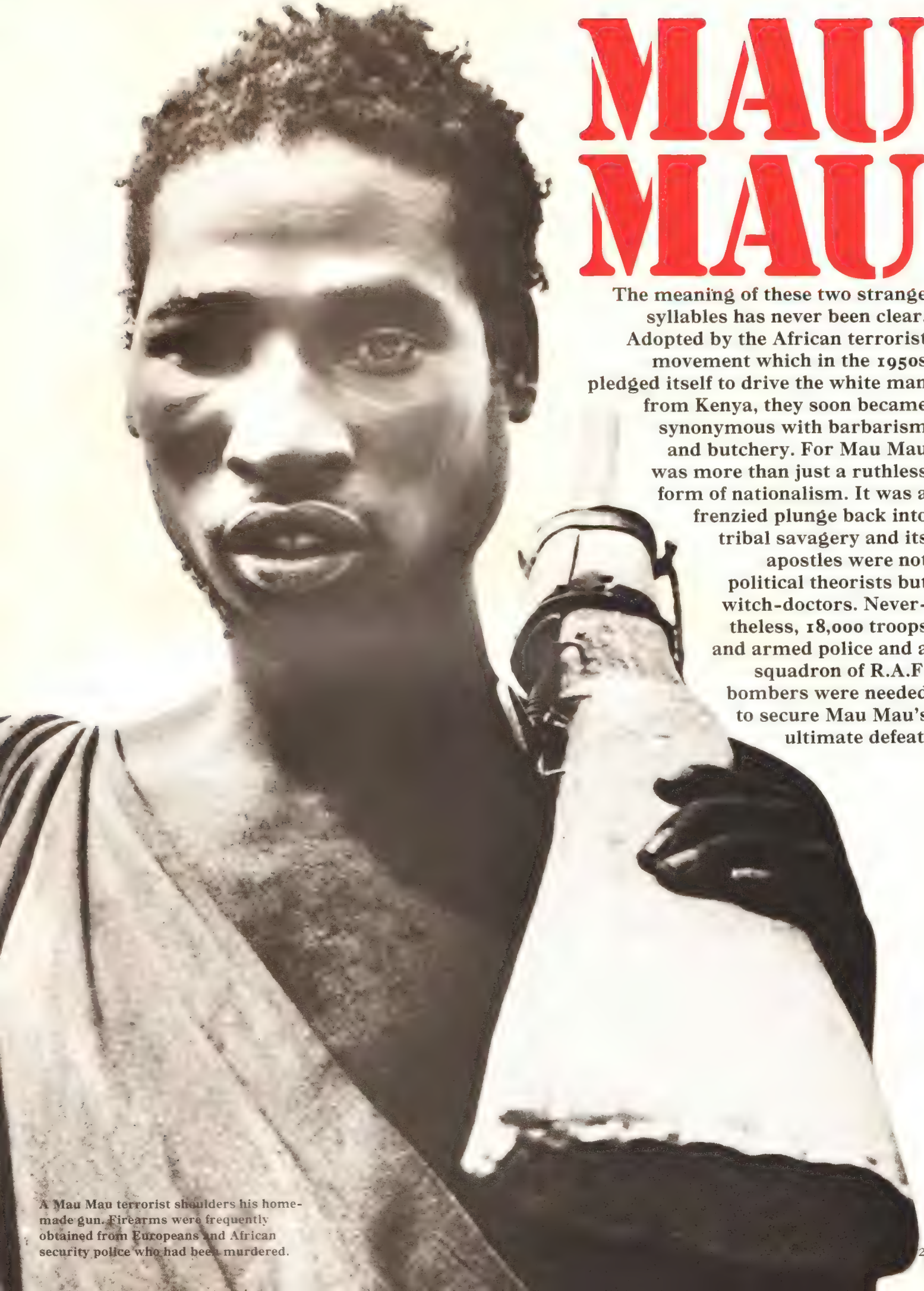
The whites, however, were unsatisfied with this performance. It was followed by a spate of murders and Mitchell was called upon privately by the settler leaders to declare an emergency and arrest Kenyatta. Mitchell, convinced that "Mau Mau" was just another of the pentecostal sects he had seen rise and disintegrate in other parts of Africa, refused the settlers' demands. However, the K.A.U. had learned of their discussions with Mitchell, and on August 16, 1952, some of its militants, including Dedan Kimathi and Waruhiu Itote (who assumed the name of "General China" during the Emergency) called on Kenyatta and indicated that preparations were being made to defend the forest fastnesses. He assured them that from his first visit to England in 1929 he had pledged himself to Kenya's freedom. He told them that if they had to die for Kenya, they would die well. But he did not instruct them. He remained a political leader always, watchful of a force he could not control.

In September, 1952, Mitchell retired and was replaced by Sir Evelyn Baring. Two weeks after his arrival Baring declared a State of Emergency and Kenyatta and other top K.A.U. leaders were arrested. But it was the political leadership, not the militants, that had been removed. K.A.U. was proscribed, as "Mau Mau" and K.C.A. had been. After a stunned week, the militants prepared for war. Oathing was stepped up. Chief Nderi, a government supporter, was hacked to death when he surprised an oathing party under the command of Dedan Kimathi working, 500 strong, in daylight by a river bank. Tom Mbotela, a moderate who stood for multiracialism in government, also fell. Eric Bowyer was hacked to death on his lonely farm near Naivasha on October 27, becoming the first white victim of Mau Mau atrocity.

Unwilling to make a martyr of Kenyatta by confining him without charge or trial, the government decided to try him for managing Mau Mau and to discredit him by recounting the disgusting aspects of Mau Mau operations. Few objective observers were impressed by the government's case. Prosecution witnesses were few and of dubious credibility and there was little surprise when it was subsequently revealed that the government's chief witness, Rawson Macharia, had perjured himself. The defence team, led by D.N. Pritt, Q.C. repeatedly humiliated the Kenyan legal faculty, but the judge found Kenyatta and the other defendants guilty and passed maximum sentences of seven years' imprisonment, with a recommendation that they should be held in indefinite detention thereafter. The government thus removed Kenyatta from the scene while the war raged, unwittingly preserving him as the only African leader who would be acceptable to the faction-torn Kikuyu, and the only Kikuyu capable of commanding support from the non-Kikuyu tribes when peace came.

MAU MAU

The meaning of these two strange syllables has never been clear. Adopted by the African terrorist movement which in the 1950s pledged itself to drive the white man from Kenya, they soon became synonymous with barbarism and butchery. For Mau Mau was more than just a ruthless form of nationalism. It was a frenzied plunge back into tribal savagery and its apostles were not political theorists but witch-doctors. Nevertheless, 18,000 troops and armed police and a squadron of R.A.F. bombers were needed to secure Mau Mau's ultimate defeat.



A Mau Mau terrorist shoulders his home-made gun. Firearms were frequently obtained from Europeans and African security police who had been murdered.

The First Round

Launched by a group of militant young Kikuyu in 1947, Mau Mau sought to unite opposition to white supremacy and enforce obedience and secrecy through oathing ceremonies. Unwilling recruits were often forced to take part in the ceremonies, which were conducted in darkness and involved black magic rituals like eating goats' intestines and drinking blood from a skull. Bound together by fear as well as loyalty, Mau Mau killers struck at those Africans who upheld colonial authority: police and village headmen.

Intimidation, robbery and arson also increased and in October, 1952, the Governor of Kenya finally declared a State of Emergency. Nationalist leaders suspected of terrorist links were rounded up and thousands of Kikuyu working on white farms were packed off to tribal reserves. These measures marked the end of Mau Mau's initial campaign, but they also marked the opening of an even bloodier offensive lasting for two more years.

Europeans are warned against picnicking near this country chapel in Kenya, where terrorists have already attacked the unwary.

Two African houseboys murdered by terrorists lie in their own blood in the room where they were cut down. Mau Mau killed loyal Kikuyu without hesitation.

A mongoose with its head cut off hangs from a tree near a chosen victim's home in a barbaric Mau Mau gesture of warning.

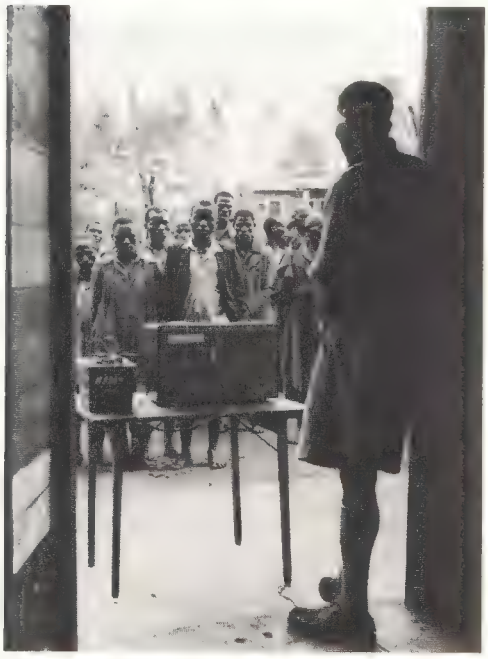
The ingredients of a Mau Mau oath-taking ceremony seized by the police are revealed as gourds, cattle brains, goat intestines, a skull, beans, raw flesh and animal blood.

Jomo Kenyatta, found guilty of managing Mau Mau, featured as the Messiah in many of the movement's blasphemous hymns.

Massacre at Lari

After the declaration of a State of Emergency in October, 1952, sporadic acts of Mau Mau violence gave way to large-scale attacks by guerrilla gangs hiding in the forests. Hit-and-run raids were launched against isolated European farms and police stations. But Kikuyu who refused to co-operate with the terrorists suffered most frequently.

Of the 2,018 Mau Mau murder victims, 1,819 were Kikuyu. Early in 1953 a Mau Mau gang set fire to the homes of villagers in Lari. Those who tried to escape were speared, cut down with knives and pangas or thrown back into the flames. Over 100 perished. The massacre was self-defeating as well as brutal. Even those Africans who had little love for the authorities and felt some sympathy for Mau Mau were appalled. Many Kikuyu communities now began to form their own home guard to protect themselves against the terrorists. One chief rallied his villagers by nailing a Union Jack to his house. It was a direct challenge to Mau Mau.



Kikuyu villagers listen fearfully to radio news about Mau Mau marauders in their area.

A district officer with an interpreter prepares to question a terrorist suspect.

Barbed-wire defences ring a police station in a remote country area where Mau Mau gangs operated. These outposts of authority, stored with weapons, were often attacked.

Police arrest a Kikuyu girl accused of Mau Mau sympathies.

An anti-Mau Mau medicine-man cleanses a tribesman of the society's oath with a magic ritual believed to be all-powerful.

Kenya's Whites Beat the War Drum

Life for Kenya's whites changed little at first under the Emergency. But in January, 1953, the mood changed when a young British family were hacked to death in their home. A mob of angry whites marched to Government House in Nairobi flourishing their weapons and demanding tougher action against Mau Mau. At one meeting it was proposed that 50,000 Kikuyu should be shot. Draconian measures followed. The death penalty was extended to anyone taking part in illegal oathings, aiding terrorists or unlawfully possessing arms. Forests used by Mau Mau were made prohibited areas and any African seen there was shot on sight. Armoured cars and reconnaissance planes made widespread sweeps and R.A.F. Vulcans bombed suspected hideouts.

A British soldier (right) arrests a towering Kikuyu suspected of Mau Mau activities.

Loyal Kikuyu villagers, who suffered most from Mau Mau raids, search the forest fringe for lurking terrorists.

A British police inspector briefs his men before they start on a hunt through the forested Aberdare Mountains, which became a notorious haunt of Mau Mau marauders.

Security forces chase a Mau Mau gang through thick bush. Terrorist ambushes were a constant danger in these operations.

The Fruits of Atrocity

The military turning-point in the war against Mau Mau came with Operation Anvil on April 24, 1954. Aided by ex-Mau Mau men in masks, the Army screened the entire African population of Nairobi and other towns. Kikuyuland was sealed off from the rest of the country and tribesmen were moved into specially fortified villages, thus cutting the forest guerrillas off from their sources of supply. Security forces stepped up the hunt for the terrorists and by the end of 1954 Mau Mau was no longer a serious threat.

But in March, 1959, settler hopes of perpetuating the old order were shattered. It emerged that 11 inmates had died at the Hola camp for Mau Mau detainees as a result of deliberate ill-treatment. Within nine months Britain's Colonial Secretary, Iain Macleod, made it plain that he intended to introduce majority rule as soon as possible. "Hola helped to convince me," he wrote later, "that swift change was needed in Kenya."

Kenya police fingerprint a Mau Mau man they have just killed in a gun-battle with terrorists.

A Kikuyu home guard identifies a suspect (centre) detained during a massive police round-up.

Some of the Kikuyu rounded up during Operation

Ill-clad and barefoot, the gang accused of massacring 100 Kikuyu at Lari in 1953 stand trial in a Nairobi court.

Anvil await questioning under armed guard. Out of a total of 116,000 suspects detained, 44,500 were sent for trial and the rest were released.

II. Journey to the Promised Land

The declaration of the Emergency had goaded the Kikuyu into immediate resistance. This meant that the fight was between, on one side, the British, with ultimately overwhelming military resources and support from the other Kenyan tribes, as well as Kikuyu "loyalists"; and, on the other side, the oathed and committed Kikuyu, perhaps 700,000 in number at the height of the war. But there were certainly never more than 30,000 fighters in the forests, and perhaps as few as 12,000. The British problem was twofold: to find and destroy the units of the "Land and Freedom Army" in the forests, and to cut off their supplies from the reserve, from the squatters on white farms, and, above all, from Nairobi. They began by bringing in British troops (ultimately nearly a division in strength), six battalions of the King's African Rifles, (one of which had, as its best footballer and keenest Mau Mau hunter, a certain Sergeant Idi Amin of Uganda), the Kenya Regiment, formed of young settlers, and an expanded police with an invaluable air wing. Sir Percy Sillitoe, Director-General of the Security Services in Britain, reorganized the police Special Branch, which had proved woefully weak on intelligence. Finally, round a nucleus of loyal Kikuyu, which meant both tribal traditionalists disgusted with Mau Mau extremism and Christians who stuck by their Churches and missions (and who throughout protected their white missionaries) was built the Home Guard. It became the spearhead in the strategy of isolating the forest fighters.

The Mau Mau had, initially, the advantage of terrain: the forest is vast. Their first need was to make sure of support from the Kikuyu masses, so oathing was stepped up. Attacks on white settlers also began, and although these were always sporadic, they made up in horror what they lacked in tactical value. The mutilation of men and animals, however, gave the British what they needed – propaganda material that ensured that the Mau Mau terrorists would have no sympathy in the West – especially America. The settlers were not frightened, if that was what the Mau Mau expected, by such displays of beastliness and hate; they replied with equal hate but also equal warlike resolution.

The real value of the attacks on white farmers was that it impressed on ordinary Kikuyu that whites had no shield of invulnerability about them; they could be slaughtered like other men, and their magic ripped up with their bellies. The settler farmsteads were mostly remote and defenceless against determined attacks by superior numbers. The casualties could have been very heavy, and forced a dispersal of the attacking white troops and their allies to protect the scattered farms. But such a strategy was not pursued. Only 32 European civilians were killed throughout the war. The main effect of the strain of living constantly with loaded weapons, and the fear that one's own trusted servants were traitors, was to make the whites fiercer, and ultimately to cause them to expel all their Kikuyu squatters and farmworkers, replacing them with other tribesmen. From the Mau Mau point of view, these attacks produced a bonus in Nairobi where the exhibitionist settlers festooned themselves with pistols and the like, only to have them stolen for the forest fighters' armoury. Weapons, and cartridges especially, they also obtained from African members of the security forces (prostitutes sold themselves for cartridges) while in the forest guns were made, with considerable skill, from water piping, but these failed after firing only a few rounds of ·303 ammunition

The settlers were understandably infuriated at the murder of farmers. Two other farm attacks had followed that upon the farmer, Bowyer; then on January 24, 1953, five days after the prosecution had completed its evidence against Kenyatta, the worst outrage to date occurred. A young couple named Ruck were hacked to death during a running battle across the lawns of their home and then their six-year-old child was slain as he cowered in his room. Several hundred Europeans marched on Government House two days later, brandishing weapons and demanding to see Baring. He refused to meet them and, while the askaris – European-trained African soldiers – stood aside, he faced them with white police. They withdrew, but the government nevertheless seemed on the verge of

Sir Evelyn Baring, Kenya's retiring Governor, inspects the farewell parade held for him in 1959. The scourge of Mau Mau, he impressed an American observer in 1952 as being "typically British . . . courteous, grave, and I suspect rather tough under a languid, pale exterior."

Despite the Mau Mau emergency and African nationalist hostility, Sir Evelyn Baring went ahead with the opening of Kenya's new parliament building in February, 1954.

falling. The Europeans were only somewhat appeased when the flamboyant General Sir George Erskine arrived to assist in organizing the forces.

Gradually, however, the security forces gained the initiative and the Land and Freedom Army splintered into a dozen units, often out of touch with each other and led by various self-styled generals. The final blow to Mau Mau came with "Operation Anvil," a vast military intelligence exercise launched in April, 1954. Practically every Kikuyu male of the warrior-age bracket – 18–35 – was interrogated. Those found guilty of Mau Mau associations or oathing were submitted to a process of "rehabilitation" by teams of Christian or witch-doctor Africans, depending on the religious affiliation of the suspects concerned. It was said that some of the men were hardly human after the debased vows they had taken and one respected anthropologist doubted whether those who had taken the "higher oaths" could ever be returned to a civilized society. Stepped-up security measures against Mau Mau members still at large quickly followed and by the end of 1954 the movement was no longer a serious military threat. Although the Emergency was to continue officially until 1960, many settlers supposed that their political future was already assured and that Britain would have no further truck with the African nationalists. The reverse was true: the struggle in Kenya and the mood of the world outside had doomed settlerdom. Every dead African in the forests had cost the British taxpayer £10,000 and the conclusion drawn in London was that the settlers were incapable of providing the country with stable government. The Colonial Office wished to see more sensitive political institutions set up in Kenya through which the Africans could present and gain redress for their grievances before another explosion occurred. The ideal was a multiracial régime, manned by moderate men of all colours and classes.

In 1956 Oliver Lyttleton, Secretary of State, insisted on bringing at least one African into the Governor's Executive Council. It was also agreed that the appointed African members of the Council should be elected in future and that their numbers would be increased from six to eight. Elections on a qualified franchise were held in March, 1957. These moves split the settlers. One group, led by the liberal, Michael Blundell, accepted the Lyttleton view and sought multiracial government; but the larger group, led by Group-Captain Briggs, demanded a constitution which would give the white man even more power. In the situation then prevailing, this was an impossible demand.

The Mau Mau war had not only failed to silence African nationalism, it had opened the way to it by suppressing for a few years Kikuyu leadership and superiority. Kenyatta's detention gave the Kikuyu a fixed objective, but new leadership came from other tribes, notably the Luo. When all Kenya-wide political organization was banned, and the Africans seemed thrust back into tribal organization, Oginga Odinga, a former K.A.U. organizer in Nyanza, managed informally to link all the tribal groupings or parties. Though Odinga condemned the Lyttleton constitution as a half-hearted attempt to regain African confidence in British liberal policies, he stood for election and entered the Legislative Council in 1957. There were now eight African members and they formed a body which, for the first time, effectively straddled tribalism. Odinga developed a fiery political style, and used his parliamentary privilege to rally Africans.

The other Luo to emerge was Tom Mboya, whose smooth diction, perfect English and svelte clothing made him a complete contrast to Odinga. Another mission-educated African, he had been trained as a trade union leader in England and America and had set up the Kenya Federation of Trade Unions in place of the earlier East African Trade Union Congress, which had been an unregistered and hence illegal body. While the Briggs party regarded him as little better than a Communist, Odinga from early on distrusted him as a "moderate" sent by capitalists from America to compromise the purity of "Uhuru" – freedom. In fact, Mboya's sophisticated manners did more for the African cause than Odinga's strident extremism. However, both qualities were needed to create the new, intertribal movement which arose on the ashes

of Mau Mau with a speed that stunned the settlers. Odinga and Mboya were ably backed by men from other tribes such as Ngala, Arap Moi, Mate and Muliro. The "African Elected Members' Organization" became a committee that ceaselessly demanded a new constitution and laboured to make the chamber "a platform from which settlers and the governments of Kenya and Britain could hear African opinion." What mattered was that Britain heard.

Britain did hear and liberals of all parties became convinced that Africa must soon go the way of India and that it would be best for the break to occur within the Commonwealth context. In October, 1959, the Conservatives gained power for a third successive term and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan determined to rid Britain of her embarrassing imperial legacies – including Kenya. Three months later the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, Iain Macleod, introduced electoral arrangements in Kenya which would provide the Africans with a majority in the legislature, though the Governor retained his right to choose his own executive, thus ensuring that it would remain multiracial. Blundell was disturbed at the speed of developments, but nevertheless formed his liberal group into the New Kenya party, pledging it to support an African government.

Encouraged by Whitehall's obvious desire to reach a peaceful settlement, Mboya immediately declared that the constitution was outdated and joined with Odinga in calling for Kenyatta's release. In May, 1960, they formed the Kenya African National Union (K.A.N.U.). But it was the party of the two largest tribes, the Kikuyu and the Luo, and this alliance alarmed the smaller tribes, who began to form their own bloc. They were at one with K.A.N.U. in pressing for independence and the release of Kenyatta, but their ideas differed on the provisions of the independence constitution. A few weeks after K.A.N.U. was formed, a new party of minor tribes, called the Kenya African Democratic Union (K.A.D.U.), was established. Prompted to some extent by the settler politicians, it advocated a federal constitution, whereas K.A.N.U. wanted a centralized government.

Kenyatta's prison sentence had been completed in 1959, and he had been moved from Lokitaung to detention in Lodwar, in northern Kenya. The idea of his return to political life was anathema to most Europeans and the Governor of Kenya, Sir Patrick Renison, stated in 1960 that his release would be "a danger to security." The Corfield Report – *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau* – which was issued that May lent weight to Renison's assertion. It upheld the judicial verdict against Kenyatta and stressed his responsibility for the horrors of Mau Mau. Kenyatta himself dismissed the report as "a pack of lies, collected from needy informers," and on May 14 K.A.N.U. nominated him as its president – a nomination promptly vetoed by the government. Preparations went ahead for the elections to be held in February, 1961, with K.A.N.U. campaigning on the issue of Kenyatta's release. Predictably, the party won two-thirds of the black [illegible] refused to form a government [illegible] its leader remained in detention. Although K.A.D.U. managed to form a coalition government with Blundell's New Kenya party it was obvious that effective administration would become increasingly impossible without Kenyatta. There was a recrudescence of oathing, friction between the Masai and the Kikuyu, and from the settlers came dire predictions of tribal warfare on the scale of that already raging in the newly independent Congo. If Kenyatta could prevent the slide into chaos, reasoned the authorities, then he must be released. He returned to a thunderous welcome in Kikuyuland on August 14, 1961, and told the crowd: "I regard everybody as my friends; you know the commandment 'Love thy Neighbour,' well, the world is my neighbour."

In October Kenyatta accepted the presidency of K.A.N.U. and the rules were then changed to allow him to enter the Legislative Council. On January 12, 1962, he was elected unopposed as the Member for the Fort Hall constituency, where a K.A.N.U. man gave up his seat to him. In April he accepted the post of Minister of State for Constitutional Affairs and Economic Planning. He also accepted the Governor's veto on Odinga's entering the government with him. And to his supporters' surprise, he apparently accepted K.A.D.U.'s demands for regionalism, if not federalism. Kenyatta, however, had seen how, once he possessed "the political kingdom," his old friend, Nkrumah, had uprooted the regionalism forced upon him.

Kenyatta trusted to the elections to get a verdict that would end the confusion and growing inter-tribal wrangling. His trust was well founded. In 1963, K.A.N.U. triumphed completely at the elections, and on June 1 Kenyatta became the first Prime Minister of a self-governing Kenya. Under the surface squabbling of the leaders, a national feeling had emerged and Kenyatta was the focus of it. Only on the coast did K.A.D.U. poll strongly, and it was plain that the regional "safeguards" would not last long. Kenyatta formed a multitribal cabinet, with European and Asian ministers as well as proof of his commitment to multiracialism.

Complete independence could no longer be delayed and on December 12, 1963, came "the greatest day in Kenya's history and the happiest day in my life," as Kenyatta told a vast crowd in the Independence Stadium. Among the guests were the Duke of Edinburgh, representing the Queen, Duncan Sandys, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, who had hastened Britain's exit, the Europeans who had believed in Kenyatta and helped him since his release, his old friends from London days, including Dinah Stock, and his three wives, Grace, Edna and Ngina. In darkness the Union Jack was lowered, then the new Kenyan flag was unfurled. The years of British rule were over.

If Britain had deliberately planned to bring into existence a moderate government of Africans, led by a moderate and essentially pro-British African elder statesman, it could hardly have done better. In Africanization, in racial policy, in the definition of African Socialism, Kenyatta's Kenya chose a middle way, and when the fiery Odinga rebelled against that policy, he lost and ended in gaol. It was Kenyatta who called in British troops to crush the 1964 mutiny among the Kenya Rifles. Money poured into Kenya, and, in the main, it was the Kikuyu who administered the state with efficiency. The tribe thus reached its promised land, in one man's lifetime.

BURNING SPEAR

No African leader has aroused more hatred and adulation than Jomo Kenyatta. Jomo – the name means "Burning Spear" – was a Kikuyu herdboy born under the imperial rule of Queen Victoria. For Kenya's whites his name came to symbolize evil and terror. For his own people, it became a source of inspiration and pride.

Kenyatta poses with spear (above) in 1938 to assert his African identity. As the seasoned political campaigner of the 1960s (insert) he reverts to the Western style of dress.

The Route to Prison

Jomo Kenyatta was born some time in the years 1889–98. The Kikuyu took note only of significant events – droughts, wars, famines – so the birth of the man later regarded as the Saviour of his people went unrecorded. Obtaining a well-paid job as a water-meter reader in Nairobi, he showed no interest in politics until 1927 when he joined the nationalists.

In 1929 he went to London to plead their cause and remained there almost continuously until 1946, studying, planning, agitating. Given a hero's welcome on his return home, he sought to unite all Kenyans under the nationalist banner. But in 1953 he was charged with leading the Mau Mau rebellion among the Kikuyu. His counsel argued that the case against him was "the most childishly weak . . . made against any man in the history of the British Empire." The court disagreed and on April 8, 1953, Kenyatta was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment to be followed by indefinite restriction.

Kenyatta learns carpentry at Thogoto mission school. Initiated by rite of circumcision into the Kikuyu warrior ranks, he was also baptized by the Scottish Kirk.

This was the scene that greeted the young Kenyatta when he enrolled as a pupil at the Scottish mission school of Thogoto in 1909. Discipline was tough and even football was regarded by the mission head as a means of encouraging qualities "which have done so much to make a Britisher."

Well protected against the English cold, Kenyatta attends the fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in October, 1945. "Racial discrimination must go," he told delegates, "and then people can perhaps enjoy the right of citizenship which is the desire of every East African. Self-independence must be our aim."

Kenyatta's ablest ally was a Luo, Tom Mboya (inset left) shown visiting the old man at his detention camp in 1961. Mboya conveyed Kenyatta's greetings to 20,000 Africans in Nairobi (above).

The Route to Power

When his prison sentence expired in 1959, Kenyatta was moved to a detention camp. The Governor, Sir Patrick Renison, saw him as "the African leader to darkness and death" and few settlers could imagine that the man they reviled as the organizer of Mau Mau would ever be permitted to resume political activity. To his own followers, however, Kenyatta remained, in the words of Tom Mboya, his chief lieutenant, "the leader of Kenya – and no government will be formed in Kenya unless it is led by Kenyatta."

Government without him indeed proved impossible: in August, 1961, he was released and at once resumed the campaign for Uhuru. In May, 1963, his party won the elections and he became the first Prime Minister of an internally self-governing Kenya. The following December the country gained full independence. Kenyatta's forgive-and-forget attitude surprised his white critics. "I don't know where we'd be without him," one of them confessed to a visitor in 1965. "And to think that only 18 months ago we were thinking of how we could manage to shoot the bastard."

A Turkana tribesman (left) stores his voter's card in his snuff horn. At the pre-independence elections of May, 1963 (above), which were supervised by white officials, Kenyatta swept to power.

Crowds welcome Kenyatta back from detention in August, 1961. "I do not feel bitter towards anyone at all," he told them, "because I know my cause and activities were just."

In December, 1963, on the eve of Kenya's independence, Kenyatta shocked white opinion by appearing at a press conference with his arm around "Field-Marshal" Mwariama, a notorious Mau Mau leader. Kenyatta, who always denied responsibility for the terrorist movement, declared that it was no longer a danger and urged its remaining members to come out of their forest hideouts.

The Duke of Edinburgh (left) representing the Queen, salutes Kenya's new flag at the independence day celebrations on December 12, 1963.

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